

**Talbot County Tourism Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, September 20, 2017  
8:30 a.m.**

**101 Marlboro Avenue, Suite 53, Conference Room #1, Easton, MD 21601**

**I. Call to Order**

Chairperson Judy Bixler called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

**Board Members Present:** Judy Bixler, John Booth, Kelley Cox, Ian Fleming, Tracey Johns, Dolores Jones, Harold Klinger, Laura Price, Jeff Schneider, Ben Simons, Cassandra Vanhooser and Kimberly Weller

**Board Members Absent:** Angela Eade, Al Silverstein

**Recording Secretary:** Candace Harris

**Visitors:** Ryan Snow

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the August meeting were presented. Dolores Jones moved that the minutes be accepted as written. John Booth seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**III. Old Business**

**Hotel Motel Position:** Ms. Vanhooser asked for recommendations to fill the Hotel/Motel Position on the Tourism Board. Recommendations included John Wilson from the Tidewater Inn, Waitman Vanorsdale at Fairfield Inn, Luran Catterton at Tidewater Inn, Carol Peach-Woods from the Inn at Perry Cabin, and Cheri Kerns at Quality Inn. Ms. Vanhooser said that she would put out feelers to see if any of these individuals are interested. The Board will then make a recommendation to the County Council.

**Restaurant Week 2018:** Mr. Fleming, Ms. Jones and Ms. Vanhooser met and talked about the plans for Restaurant Week 2018 which will be a straight promotion next year. The committee plans to have the letters with details about Restaurant Week to go out to the restaurateurs in October. Ms. Vanhooser noted that she and the Economic Development team would like to forge a stronger bond with the Talbot County Public School's Culinary Program. Linda Brown attended the Launch Party last year at our invitation, and Ms. Vanhooser plans to have the Tourism Board tour the culinary program

at the high school. She has also reached out to Clay Railey of Chesapeake College to discuss their hospitality program.

**Short Term Rentals:** Ms. Vanhooser distributed a statement that she wrote on behalf of the Tourism Board regarding short-term rentals. The letter was the result of a committee meeting with Mr. Silverstein, Ms. Jones, Ms. Eade, Miguel Salinas and Elisa Deflaux.

During the discussion about the committee's recommendations, Ms. Price again state that she believes homeowners should have a stake in the game. Ms. Vanhooser stated that the committee doesn't agree with that concept. She explained that someone may buy a home here, rent it out as a short-term rental to help offset costs, but retire here and become productive members of the community. The committee believes the key is good property management and enforcement of the existing and/or forthcoming rules. In the letter, Ms. Vanhooser suggested that the County look at licensing alternative forms of lodging. Ms. Price noted that Easton requires that a homeowner live in their residence if they are going to operate a short-term rental. Ms. Vanhooser said the committee did not address the private road issue. She said that she would amend the letter and distribute the draft again electronically. Board members should submit changes by noon on Friday.

#### **IV. New Business**

**Current Tourism Tax Codes:** Ms. Vanhooser passed out the current tourism tax code numbers. The Board discussed some of the reasons why the numbers are down. Mr. Klinger noted that Harbourtowne has been down since last fall and that closure is reflected in the tourism tax collections. General merchandise and amusement taxes were also down, which is consistent with what other jurisdictions are reporting.

**Maryland Open Meeting Act Requirements:** The requirements were distributed. Ms. Vanhooser asked Board members to become familiar with the law. There is online training available, and the chairman and director are required to take it. Ms. Vanhooser encouraged others to take the training and forward their certificates to her to be filed with the County manager's office.

**MATPRA:** Ms. Vanhooser attended the MAPTRA conference in Winchester, Virginia, the second week of September. She reported that many MATPRA members said again how much they enjoyed the event hosted about Talbot County last year. She pitched the Frederick Douglass 200 Birthday Celebration to the journalists and there was a lot of interest. Participation in MATPRA has really paid off for Talbot County. Zagat and Southern Living are both coming the first week of October. We have a FAM trip from France that will be coming this month and a FAM trip from Switzerland in December, both as a result of IPW.

#### **V. Town Reports**

Representatives from each of the towns reported on news and events taking place in their jurisdictions.

**VI. Next Board Meeting**

The next board meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, October 11, 2017, at 8:30 a.m.

**X. Adjournment**

Ms. Bixler thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. Harold Klinger motioned for adjournment and Jeff Schneider seconded. The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:29 a.m.

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